

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 /084 W

-----232216 014434 /64

R 231641Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5860

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T TUNIS 1260

DEPARTMENT PASS AID, COMMERCE, DOD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR TS

SUBJECT: US-TUNISIAN RELATIONS: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: TUNIS 1259

1. SUMMARY: DURING NEARLY TWO HOURS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER HHTVB CHATTY FEBRUARY 23 DEVOTED CHIEFLY TO MIDDLE EAST SUBJECTS (REFTEL), I RAISED TWO BILATERAL ISSUES WITH HIM: I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE IN PRINCIPLE DISPOSED TO HOLDING AN EARLIER US-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION MEETING, DESPITE THE DEARTH OF PROMISING NEW AID PROJECTS, AND THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS AN EARLY "MINISTERIAL LEVEL" CONTACT BETWEEN GOT AND THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MY TALK WITH CHATTY TODAY (REFTEL) I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD DELIVERED HWS LETTER INTO SECRETARY VANCE'S HANDS AT AMMAN, BUT THAT TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES DID  
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NOT PERMIT AN EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF US-TUNISIAN BILATERAL MATTERS. HOWEVER, I COULD REPORT ON FOLLOWING:

3. JOINT COMMISSION: SECRETARY AND HIS PARTY WERE AWARE OF GOT DESIRE TO HOLD AN EARLY MEETING OF US-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION AND APPRECIATED THAT GOT HOPED IT COULD BE HELD PRIOR TO JUNE MEETING OF OBRD

CONSULTATIVE GROUP IN TUNIS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT IT COULD HAVE ON OTHER DONORS' ATTITUDES. UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHORTON WERE DISPOSED TO VISIT TUNIS IN JOINT COMMISSION FRAMEWORK AND WE COULD BEGIN TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A VISIT. I WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT TIMING OF VISIT/JOINT COMMISSION MEETING MIGHT ENTAIL SOME DIFFICULTIES IN VIEW OF SERIES OF WASHINGTON VISITS BY ME HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT THIS SPRING AS WELL AS SIMPLE BUREAUCRATIC EFFORT REQUIRED BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO GET GEARED UP FOR A FULL-FLEDGED JOINT COMMISSION EFFORT. I SAID I FRANKLY SAW LITTLE ON THE DRAWING BOARDS THAT WOULD BE READY TO DELIVER OR ANNOUNCE IN APRIL OR MAY. CHATY THOUGHT THAT UNLESS THE JOINT COMMISSION COULD BE A THUMPING SUCCESS (I.E. MUCH MORE AID FOR TUNISIA) IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BETTER NOT TO HOLD AN EARLY MEETING. GOT WOULD MUCH PREFER "MINISTERIAL" PORTION OF MEETING TO PRECEDE JOINT COMMISSION, UNLIKE 1976 MEETING, WHERE IT FOLLOWED. I SUGGESTED HE MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF PLAN AND LET US HAVE THEIR CONSIDERED THOUGHTS.

4. HIGH LEVEL CONTACT: REGARDING GOT'S DESIRE FOR WHAT HE HAD EARLIER TERMED "MINISTERIAL LEVEL" CONTACT WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, I TOLD CHATTY THAT HERE TOO I HAD FOUND THE SECRETARY AND HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISERS COOPERATIVE AND UNDERSTANDING. THE TIMING AGAIN WOULD BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WERE HEAVILY COMMITTED UNTIL "EARLY -6";#  
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NEVERTHELESS, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING TUNISIANS "AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL" A SUBJECT WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE PURSUED WITH AMBASSADOR HEDDA WHO HAD ALREADY RAISED IT WITH THE DEPARTMENT. CHATTY SAID THAT HE WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THIS INDICATION OF US INTEREST AND HE KNEW THAT PRIME MINISTER HOUIRA (WHO IS ALREADY PLANNING TO VISIT US SOON IN SEARCH OF PRIVATE INVESTMENTS) WOULD ALSO BE. PERHAPS, HE SAID, A JOINT COMMISSION MEETING COULD BE ASSEMBLED IN WASHINGTON IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN INFORMAL VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTR OR PERHAPS SUCH A VISIT MIGHT RENDER A JOINT COMMISSION MEETING SUPERFLUOUS. HE WOULD BE ANXIOUS TO HEAR MORE FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON ITS VIEWS. MEANWHILE HE WOULD TALK THE MATTER OVER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

5. COMMENT: CHATTY'S COMMENTS ON MODALITIES OF NEXT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING REFLECT OFT-REPEATED GOT FEELING THAT LAST ONE WAS SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTING IN

ITS RESULTS. I DID NOT AT THIS SESSION TRY TOO HEAVILY  
TO DISABUSE CHATY OF HIS EXPECTATION FOR INCREASED  
AMERICAN LARGESSE, BEYOND POINTING OUT THAT WE HAVE  
LITTLE NEW ON THE DRAWING BOARD.

6. DEPARTMENT KNOWS WELL AMBASSADOR HEDDA'S EFFORTS  
TO GET TUNISIA INTO THE SELECT COMPANY OF US FRIENDS  
RECEIVING SECURITY SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE. HIS ENTHUSIASM  
FOR THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN CONTAGIOUS AT HIGH GOT LEVELS  
AND HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL. I DO HOPE THE DEPARTMENT  
WILL HAMMER HOME TO HEDDA THE KNOCK-DOWN, DRAG-OUT  
SPOTLIGHTED PUBLIC ANALYSIS OF TUNISIA THAT A RELUCTANT  
CONGRESS WILL REQUIRE BEFORE AGREEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED  
ON SUCH LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE.  
MULCAHY

NOTE BY OCT: #TEXT AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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